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PRESS RELEASE

Project HOPE, USAID in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan start DOTS implementation in Balkan region.

Balkanabat, November 16, 2007 – The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Project HOPE will help to implement tuberculosis (TB) treatment strategy DOTS in three new towns and five new districts in Balkan region. This assistance supports the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (MOHMIT) in the implementation of the National TB Program, which envisions nationwide DOTS implementation by 2009.

DOTS stands for Directly Observed Treatment Short-course strategy, recommended for treatment of TB by the World Health Organization. With the new expansion, USAID and Project HOPE's project will cover the entire Balkan Region with DOTS, providing the population of the region access to high quality services in the prevention and treatment of TB.

In preparation for this expansion, the project, together with the State Medical Institute and the National TB Program specialists, trained TB doctors, laboratory specialists, and primary healthcare doctors and nurses in DOTS, and provided microscopes and supplies to local laboratories. Project specialists, together with the MOHMIT TB Prevention Center visited etrapas and towns in Balkan Region to provide technical assistance for local specialists involved in TB control. In addition, TB drugs have been supplied for this region by the Global Drug Facility (GDF) and will be provided to patients free of charge.

Tuberculosis control is one of the many areas of cooperation supported by the American people through USAID. Through Project HOPE and other partners, USAID is helping to implement the National TB Program in Turkmenistan, working in the cities of Ashgabat, Mary, and the Balkan Region.

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